REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated October 26, 2005. Claims 1-53 are presented for examination. Claims 46-50 have been amended to define more clearly what Applicants regard as their invention. It should be noted that these amendments do not narrow (in fact broaden) these claims. Claims 1, 18, 19, 39-41, 46, 48, and 50 are in independent form. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Applicants note with appreciation the indication that Claims 3-6, 13-17, 21-24, 31-35, 37, and 38 would be allowable if rewritten so as not to depend from a rejected base claim, and with no change in scope. Those claims have not been so rewritten because, for the reasons given below, their base claims are believed to be allowable.

Claims 1, 10, 18, 19, 28, 36, 39, and 43 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from European Patent EP 0356105 (Natori) in view of German Patent DE 19528425C1 (Riegel); Claims 2, 7, 8, 20, 25, and 26, as being obvious from *Natori* in view of *Riegel*, and further in view of U.S. Patent 5,500,671 (Anderson); Claims 9 and 27, as being obvious from *Natori* in view of *Riegel* and *Anderson*, and further in view U.S. Patent 6,307,526 (Mann); Claims 11, 12, 29, and 30 as being obvious from *Natori* in view of *Riegel*, and further in view of U.S. Patent 5,995,936 (Brais); and Claims 40- 42, 44-46, 48, 50, 52, and 53 as being obvious over U.S. Patent 5,206,721 (Ashida) in view of *Riegel*.

According to the present invention, an image processing apparatus and method is provided to select image data from image data recorded by a plurality of cameras showing the movements of a plurality of people. The image data is selected based on determined positions of the speaker and the person at whom the speaker is looking.

Regarding the rejection of independent Claims 1, 18, 19, and 39, Claim 1 is directed to an image processing apparatus, including an image data receiver, a speaker identifier, a speech recipient identifier, a position calculator, and a camera selector. The image data receiver receives image data recorded by a plurality of cameras showing the movements of a plurality of people. The speaker identifier determines which of the people is speaking, and the speech recipient identifier determines at whom the speaker is looking. The position calculator determines the position of the speaker and the position of the person at whom the speaker is looking. The camera selector selects image data from the received image data on the basis of the determined positions of the speaker and the person at whom the speaker is looking.

Natori, as understood by Applicants, provides an image processing system for a teleconference system which enables the tracking of a speaker's movement. The Office Action at page 3 concedes that *Natori* does not disclose a camera selector for selecting image data from received image data on the basis of determined positions of the speaker and the person at whom the speaker is looking, and points to *Riegel* as allegedly disclosing a camera selector that does so, citing the Abstract.

In the *Riegel* system, as understood by Applicants, the observer is merely looking at an image on a stereoscopic screen (DIS), the image is produced by a plurality of cameras recording different perspectives of a scene (SZ). That is, in the *Riegel* system, the observer is only looking at one object (DIS), therefore, the system of *Riegel* has no requirement to determine "at whom the speaker is looking."

In contradistinction to the apparatus recited in Claim 1, wherein a camera

selector selects image data from the received image data on the basis of both the determined position of the speaker and the determined position of the person at whom the speaker is looking, the system of *Riegel* includes one head-following unit (KVE) for following a head position, two views are selected based on the head position to create a stereoscopic effect on the screen (DIS).

Applicants submit that nothing has been found in *Riegel* that would disclose or suggest a camera selector for selecting image data from received image data on the basis of the determined positions of the speaker and the person at whom the speaker is looking.

Accordingly, Claim 1 is seen to be clearly allowable over *Natori* and *Riegel*, whether considered separately or in any permissible combination (if any).

Independent Claims 18, 19, and 39 each recite features similar in many relevant respects to those discussed above with respect to Claim 1, and are also believed to be patentable over *Natori* and *Riegel* for at least the reason discussed above.

Claim 40 includes the same features of selecting image data from received image data on the basis of the determined positions of the speaker and the person at whom the speaker is looking, as discussed above in connection with Claim 1.

Ashida, as understood by Applicants, provides a television conference system having one of the functions of automatically directing a camera toward a speaker, of transmitting video signals of picture images from a plurality of television cameras, and of displaying a document image. The Office Action at page 9 concedes that *Ashida* does not disclose camera selection means for selecting image data from received image data on the basis of the determined positions of the speaker and the person at whom the speaker is

looking, and points again to *Riegel* as allegedly disclosing camera selecting means that does so, citing the Abstract and Fig. 1.

At least for the same reasons discussed above with respect to Claim 1, Applicants submit that nothing has been found in *Riegel* that would disclose or suggest camera selecting means for selecting image data from received image data on the basis of the determined positions of the speaker and the person at whom the speaker is looking.

Accordingly, Claim 40 is seen to be clearly allowable over *Ashida* and *Riegel*, whether considered separately or in any permissible combination (if any).

Independent Claims 41, 46, 48, and 50 each recite features similar in relevant respects to those discussed above with respect to Claim 40, and are also believed to be patentable over *Ashida* and *Riegel* for at least the reasons discussed above.

A review of the other art of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicants' opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as a reference against the claims herein. Those claims are therefore believed patentable over the art of record.

The other claim in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration or reconsideration, as the case may be, of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

Leonard P. Diana
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 29,296

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3801
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

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